

Appendix E1. Essential Fish Habitat Assessment

There have been no significant changes to this appendix.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT ASSESSMENT for the COOS COUNTY NATURAL GAS PIPELINE, COOS BAY DISTRICT, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, COOS COUNTY, OREGON

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INTRODUCTION

Coos County proposes to construct a natural gas pipeline from Roseburg, Oregon, to Coos Bay, Oregon. This pipeline is approximately 60 miles in length and crosses approximately 3 miles of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Coos Bay District.

PURPOSE

An Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment is required to ensure BLM actions and/or proposed actions on BLM lands are compliant with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. EFH is defined as those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding or growth to maturity.

BACKGROUND

The act was originally passed in 1976 and provided the NMFS legislative authority for fisheries regulation in the United States offshore areas. The 1996 amendments to the Act require the identification of EFH for federally managed fish species and implementation of measures to conserve and enhance this habitat as described in federal fishery management plans. Essential Fish Habitat designated by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council includes freshwater habitats in BLM administered lands in California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

The Act requires all federal agencies to consult with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on all new federal actions that have been determined to adversely affect EFH.

Consultation is not required for existing actions, nor for actions determined not likely to adversely affect EFH.

POLICY/ACTION

I. For any project within designated EFH areas, the project-level National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis must assess potential effects to EFH, and the results of that analysis must be documented in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project.

II. If the EFH effects analysis supports a conclusion that EFH will not be adversely affected, no EFH consultation with NMFS is required.

III. If the EFH analysis results in a conclusion that adverse effects to EFH may result from the action, EFH consultation with NMFS is required.

CONCLUSIONS

The Aquatic Ecosystem Assessment (Appendix E of this EIS) evaluates impacts of the proposed action as compared to baseline conditions for each watershed occurring within the proposed action area with respect to “Matrix of Factors and Indicators” (NMFS 1998). NMFS has determined this assessment to be adequate for assessing EFH (Frank Bird pers. com.). Potential impacts from both the Hwy 42 alternative and proposed action were determined to “Not Adversely Effect” with respect to EFH.